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Last case of smallpox in Shreveport discharged from pesthouse.

SHREVEPORT, LA., August 15, 1896.

SIR: I am informed by Dr. J. F. O'Leary, city physician, that the pesthouse, of which he has had charge since the outbreak of smallpox in this city February 26 last, was closed last week. The last case having recovered and completed the postconvalescent period, was discharged. I will obtain an official record from the doctor and forward it early the coming week, but I am of the opinion that the only change from the synopsis forwarded July 16 last, viz, "under treatment, 3 (all in pesthouse), is 3 recoveries. Of this I am not positive. I have, at Surgeon R. D. Murray's, M. H. S., request, furnished him with as full and complete report of pertinent financial and statistical data as I have been able to obtain from the city of Shreveport, parishes of Caddo (in which this city is) and Bossier, La. While other parishes in this immediate vicinity suffered from one or more cases, I have been totally unable to receive an answer to my several letters to the clerk of the police jury of each of these parishes, notwithstanding the fact I have written each no less than three times. Thus it is the absence of such a report from this office. Should subsequent cases appear, either here or in the immediate vicinity, will promptly apprise you of any facts, etc., I may be able to obtain.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

A. R. BOOTH,
*Acting Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.**Report on smallpox in Mobile, Ala.*

MOBILE, ALA., August 10, 1896.

SIR: I have the honor to report that the case of smallpox (Mollie Parker, of Pensacola) which was discovered at Magazine Point, in Mobile County, and sent to the pesthouse July 5, has recovered and was discharged yesterday. This closes the record for this city and county for this season, and a recounting of the procedures will be interesting.

Mobile City, 6 cases admitted; 5 recovered, 1 died.

Mobile County, 2 cases admitted; 1 recovered, 1 died.

The first case (M. E.) occurred on March 10, soon after his arrival from New Orleans; his partner went to Pensacola and died there.

The second case (H. W.) came from New Orleans and was discovered March 13. The third case (M. G.) was discovered March 15 and died April 12; claimed to have come from Pensacola, but there must be an error here, for Pensacola's first case was on March 16. The fourth, fifth, and sixth cases came from New Orleans, 2 via Biloxi and 1 via Meridian. The seventh case occurred in a man who lived here (the only locally developed case), and the origin is still a mystery. The last case came from Pensacola, where she had been in attendance on her brother—the barber and a consumptive—who died in Pensacola June 27.

The city health officer, Dr. Abrahams, and the county health officer, Dr. Acker, deserve great credit for their promptness, alertness, and success in managing the situation and the cases. It cost \$35 to convey the first case to the pesthouse, \$15 for use of team and \$20 for the driver. The money was fully earned, as the night was rainy and cold, and the team got away from the driver while he was unloading his charge, compelling him to walk the 5 miles back to the city. The patient recovered.

During 1874 and 1875 smallpox existed here for nineteen months;

from April to October, 1874, there were 75 cases scattered through the months; no cases some months; in November there were 293 cases; in December, 253; in January, 1875, 143; in February, 131; in March, 75. In the months including April and October the cases varied from 13 to 2 per month, a total of 59 being reported. The death rate during this outbreak was large.

There were no more cases until April, 1876, when there was 1 case.

In December, 1876, 5 cases were reported, and including March, 1877, a total of 14 cases.

In 1884, from February to June, 43 cases were reported. In 1891, 1 case was discovered—an importation from Houston, Tex.

When the health officers referred to became aware of the persistence of the disease in the origin point (New Orleans), prompt measures were begun to protect the citizens of the city and county. Medical inspectors and guards were located at a camp on the Mississippi line, with instructions to board trains and stop suspects, or prevent them from getting off in Mobile. At first the inspectors stopped the trains, but later went west to Scranton and made the inspections en route to the Alabama line. The period of train inspections was from March 16 to June 2. [Cost is given later.] No fares were paid. Free vaccination was ordered, and in a great measure was made compulsory. One thousand three hundred and seventy-five were vaccinated in the board of health office, 2,591 by 4 paid physicians, 330 in public institutions, and 206 by the Marine-Hospital Service, a total of 4,502, besides the work done by the local physicians, and the 200 or so vaccinated at Magazine Point on the discovery of the last case July 5.

The Mobile pesthouse is situated 5 miles from the city, and is owned jointly by the city and county. It is built in the form of a letter T; has eight rooms and will accommodate 40 patients. There are no isolation or convalescent outbuildings. The furniture is meager, but thus far little has been needed. A care taker is kept on duty at the place so that it may be considered to be always ready for the reception of patients.

The cost from March 10 to August 9 was \$2,275.36, distributed as follows:

City share: Pesthouse expenses, \$323.25; train inspection service, \$525.73; vaccinations, \$610; total, \$1,458.98.

County share: Pesthouse expenses, \$130.65; train inspection service, \$525.73; vaccinations, \$160; total, \$816.38.

For the number of cases the cost was relatively large, but the absence of public alarm and dread, and the saving of life of the people of Mobile city and county, and the untrammelled trend of all necessary business fully compensated in every way for the expenditure.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. D. MURRAY,
Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.